

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

LAB-04 SIL-01 COM-02 INT-05 ( ISO ) W

----- 032267

R 290915Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8258

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ELAB, MI, SA

SUBJC: MALAWIAN WORKERS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN MINES

1. AT SEPT 27 CLOSING SESSION OF ANNUAL MALAWI CONGRESS PARTY (MCP) CONVENTION, PRES BANDA ANNOUNCED HE WOULD INSTRUCT HIS MINISTER OF LABOR TO REQUEST SOUTH AFRICAN COUNTERPART TO VISIT MALAWI TO DISCUSS CONDITIONS FOR POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF RECRUITING MALAWIAN LABOR FOR SOUTH AFRICAN MINES. BANDA SAID FINAL DECISION WOULD BE BASED ON CONDITIONS SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND WENELA (LABOR RECRUITING AGENCY FOR SOUTH AFRICA CHAMBER OF MINSE) WILLING TO OFFER.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT CAME AFTER MCP CONVENTION ADOPTED RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT GOM "RECONSIDER ITS SUSPENSION OF RECRUITMENT OF MALAWIANS FOR WORK IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA", FOLLOWING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRES BANDA'S REQUEST THAT CONVENTION CONSIDER QUESTION.

BANDA HAD INSTRUCTED GOM MINISTER OF LABOR TO REPORT TO CONVENTION ON TALKS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN COUNTERPART WHICH WE UNDERSTAND TOOK PLACE SOME THREE MONTHS AGO.

3. SINCE SUSPENSION OF RECRUITMENT MINERS HAVE BEEN RETURNING WITH NUMBER MALAWIAN MINERS IN SOUTH AFRICA DOWN TO ABOUT 14,000 FROM 130,000 A YEAR AGO. ACCORDING TO WENELA REPRESENTATIVE IN LILONGWE AND OTHER LOCAL SOURCES, MALAWIAN MINERS HAVE BEEN REPLACED TO LARGE EXTENT BY LABOR FROM SOUTH AFRICA, LESOTHO AND MOZMABIQUE.

4. COMMENT: IN OUR VIEW BASIC REASONS WHY GOM ANXIOUS TO REOPEN ISSUE AT THIS TIME ARE 1) LOSS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS OF MINERS WHICH AMOUNTED TO SOME 20 MILLION DOLLARS PAST 12 MONTHS; 2) POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SITUATION CREATED BY LARGE NUMBERS OF UNEMPLOYED EX-MINERS USED TO HIGHER WAGES AND LIVING CONDITIONS THAN EXIST IN MALWI; AND 3) SLOW PACE OF VIPYA PULP PROJECT (DUE LACK OF EQUITY CAPITAL) WHICH WAS SUSPOSED TO ABSORB RETURNING LABOR FORCE. ON OTHER HAND, WHILE WE UNDERSTAND THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS BEEN PUSHING FOR REOPENING QUESTION OVER PAST YEAR, REPORTS OF SLOWDOWN IN MINING ACTIVITY AND OFFSETTING LOSS OF MALAWIAN WORKERS WITH OTHER NATIONALITIES SUGGEST THAT SOUTH AFRICA MAY NOT BE WILLING TO MAKE ANY MAJOR CONCESSIONS AT THIS TIME.  
HOFFMAN

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